

Three-lakh youth in Naxal-hit areas to get jobs: Jairam

36,000 panchayat development officers, junior engineers to be appointed

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Apart from ensuring the immediate appointment of 18,000 panchayat development officers and as many junior engineers, the Centre has drawn up a blueprint to provide jobs to three-lakh youth in the 60 left wing extremist affected districts in the country.

Union Minister of Rural Development Jairam Ramesh, in his consolidated note for the approval of the Empowered Group of Secretaries for the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) under Planning Commission member Sudha Pillai, dovetails a number of rural development schemes for better impact in the Naxalite-affected districts.

For better implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), Mr. Ramesh has

• All these districts will be covered under the National Rural Livelihood Mission

• PPP project to help tribals to get real value for their produce

ordered that each panchayat appoint one panchayat development officer and a junior engineer for a period of 10 years from within the district. Non-residents would not be considered for these posts.

Apart from proposing that the cost be shared in the ratio of 75:25 between the Centre and States, Mr. Ramesh's decision will ensure the appointment of about 18,000 graduates as development officers and as many junior level engineers as some districts have more than 300 panchayats.

All these districts would be covered under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) by March 2013 with

the objective of training and providing jobs to three lakh youths over the next five years.

To ensure a better return to the tribals, a public-private partnership (PPP) pilot project in non-timber forest produce will be launched in one district each of Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

Training

Private companies will add value by training women self-help groups (SHGs) and marketing the non-timber produce.

The tribals were not getting the real value of their

produce, Mr. Ramesh said and hoped that the current arrangement would help them realise the full value of their produce.

He said he was holding talks with companies such as ITC, Ballarpur, Dabur, Wipro and Emami.

Aiming to identify the destitute, Mr. Ramesh has ordered that the district administration construct houses under the Indira Aawas Yojana (IAY) for the disabled, widowed and old age pensioners as mere financial help did not serve the purpose unless they were to handle the job.

Mr. Ramesh also decided to extend support to those who have been at the receiving end of the Naxalite movement.

Irrespective of their socio-economic standing, the government would provide a house under the IAY to those whose house had been dam-

aged in a Naxalite attack.

Potable water

To ensure availability of potable water, Mr. Ramesh has earmarked 10 per cent of the Ministry's annual budget under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) which amounts to Rs.935 crore for these 60 districts. The States would have to bear 15 per cent of the project cost with the Centre footing the rest.

He has also increased the provision under the Integrated Watershed Management Programme from Rs.12,000 per hectare to Rs.15,000 per hectare and approved construction of cement concrete roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana doing away the compulsion of blacktop roads.

The cost of construction of such roads is at least 50 per cent more and the Centre will bear 90 per cent of it.